

a linear series of tubular cells compose the filaments, which are thus said to be jointed; but in the former, although the filaments are tubular, simple and continuous without actual joints, a pseudo-jointed appearance is presented by the apposition of the little masses of contained colouring matter. Notwithstanding, having submitted the 'sea saw-dust' of the Pacific to microscopic examination on several occasions, I was much inclined to believe that the filaments were actually jointed; and this view is supported by the circumstance that an empty tubule, or one in which the parietes may be traced continuously without being interrupted by joints or internal septa, has never fallen under our notice; besides which the filaments are exceedingly brittle, usually suffering cleavage in the transverse direction. It, however, undoubtedly belongs to the *Oscillatoridæ*.

"When the filaments are first removed from the water, they may be observed adhering side by side in little bundles or fasciculi; and besides the colouring matter, the little cells, or at least the intervals between the septa, contain globules of air, which sufficiently account for their buoyancy; and, moreover, in this respect, although their abiding place is the open ocean, their habit can scarcely be regarded as very different from that of those species which flourish in damp localities exposed to the atmosphere.

"The filaments are all very short compared with their diameter, with rounded extremities; and when immersed some little time in fluid so that the contained air-bubbles make their escape or are taken up, the pale colouring matter appears to fill the cells completely, and a central portion, a little darker than the rest, may be distinctly perceived in each compartment intersected by a very delicate transverse partition.

"We have found this species off the coast of Australia and in Moreton Bay, amongst the Polynesian Islands, and on two separate occasions off the Loyalty Group, in nearly the same geographical position."—*Royal Soc. Proc.* Feb. 26, 1857.

OBITUARY NOTICE.—DR. ROBERT BALL OF DUBLIN.

Our readers will regret to hear of the decease of this eminent Irish zoologist, which took place suddenly at his residence in Dublin on the 30th of March, in consequence of a rupture of the aorta. Dr. Ball has for many years been one of the chief students of zoology in Ireland, and although his published writings are not numerous, the frequent references to his observations to be found in the works of our principal writers on British animals, bear witness to his industry and the amount of his information.

Dr. Ball held several posts in Dublin, but he was best known to naturalists as Director of the Museum in Trinity College and Secretary to the Zoological Society of Dublin, of which he was the principal supporter. He was born at Cove, county Cork, in April 1802, so that at the time of his death he was scarcely fifty-five, and as his faculties were still in their full vigour, he has left a blank in the ranks of Irish naturalists which will not easily be supplied.